Archaeological Testing at the Hogjaw Valley Site, 1Ja643, Jackson County, Alabama

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Abstract

Archaeological testing was conducted at the Hogjaw Valley Site (1Ja643) on the Tennessee River in Jackson County, Tennessee in the Fall of 2000. This archaeological project was conducted by Southern Research, Historic Preservation Consultants for the Jackson County Commission. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of a proposed erosion stabilization project at a series of gullies on this long, narrow prehistoric midden site. Most of the site has already eroded into Guntersville Lake but a remnant is preserved beneath the old County Road 91 (CR91), which has served to protect it. The bank erosion is encroaching on the existing CR91, however, and stabilization efforts are needed. The site boundaries were established by surface reconnaissance and post-hole testing and two areas were selected for larger stratigraphic test excavations, which were designated Blocks A and B. These blocks were composed of fifteen 1 x 1 m test units. These tests revealed deeply buried stratified Archaic and Woodland period deposits and intact subsurface Woodland period pit features. A variety of material culture and food remains was recovered and is described in this report. These excavations indicate that Site 1Ja643 is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion D. Although the proposed erosion stabilization project will damage a portion of the archaeological site, this adverse effect is outweighed by the protection it will afford from future erosion. Monitoring by a professional archaeologist is recommended for the proposed bank stabilization project.

Management Summary

Archaeological Testing was conducted in 2000 at the Hogjaw Valley Archaeological Site (1Ja643) on the Tennessee River in Jackson County, Alabama. This project was conducted by Southern Research, Historic Preservation Consultants for the Jackson County Commission. This work was required to assess the adverse impact of a proposed bank erosion stabilization effort at a series of gullies on this site. The archaeological work consisted of site delineation by surface reconnaissance and 15 post-hole tests and test excavation at two areas. Two block excavations (Designated Blocks A and B) examined potentially important portions of the site. These excavations revealed a deep, stratified Archaic and Woodland period deposit that included pit features from the Woodland period. A wide variety of cultural material was recovered from these excavations that added to our knowledge of life during this prehistoric period. The site was deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion D. Although the proposed bank stabilization project will negatively affect a portion of the site, this impact is outweighed by the beneficial effects of the protection from erosion to the remainder of the site. Monitoring by a professional archaeologist is recommended for the proposed bank stabilization project. On a long-term basis, lake erosion threatens the total destruction of 1Ja643 and any agencies that are charged with the protection of this site should seek ways to preserve or mitigate the adverse effects of the TVA lake erosion.

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